

Message Text

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AMCONSUL QUEBEC

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TAGS: ELAB, ECON, CA

SUBJ: STRIKE IN QUEBEC CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

1. QUEBEC'S 150,000 CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ARE OFF THE JOB ON SEPTEMBER 8 FOLLOWING STRIKE CALL BY QUEBEC FEDERATION OF LABOR (QFL) CONSTRUCTION WING. QFL, BECAUSE OF MAJORITY STATUS IN CONSTRUCTION TRADES, HAS BEEN SOLE BARGAINING AGENT IN CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS. HOWEVER, STRIKE DOES NOT HAVE FULL INDUSTRY SUPPORT. CONSTRUCTION WING CONFEDERATION OF NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS (CNTU), WHICH REPRESENTS 45,000 WORKERS VOTED AGAINST STRIKE BUT ITS LEADERS SAID CNTU WORKERS WILL RESPECT PICKET LINES. LEADERS OF THIRD LABOR CENTRAL, CONFEDERATION SYNDICATS DEMOCRATIQUES REPEATED THEIR CALL FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS. THERE ARE BREAKS EVEN WITHIN QFL RANKS. FIVE LOCALS REPRESENTING 18,000 PLUMBERS, PAINTERS, BRICKLAYERS, BOILERMAKERS AND INSULATORS DID NOT ENDORSE STRIKE ACTION. QUEBEC'S CONSTRUCTION OFFICE, A PARA-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION WITH LIAISON FUNCTIONS BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND LABOR, ESTIMATES THAT PROLONGED STRIKE IN CONSTRUCTION COULD LEAD TO SOME 50,000 LAYOFFS IN RELATED INDUSTRIES SUCH AS TRUCKING, CEMENT AND BRICK PLANTS.

2. UFL SPOKESMAN REPORTED AS SAYING THEY HAVE ACCEPTED SOME OF PROVINCIAL CONCILIATOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS BUT NOT ALL, BUT
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HAVE NOT SPECIFIED WHICH POINTS ARE STILL UNSETTLED. HOWEVER,

UNION RIGHTS ON JOB SITES IS MAJOR ISSUE. MANAGEMENT SPOKESMAN SAY THEY SEE NO IMMEDIATE PROSPECT FOR SETTLEMENT. THEY OBJECT TO CONCILIATOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS DEALING WITH MANADATORY UNION MEMBERSHIP AND RIGHTS OF SHOP STEWARDS.

3. CONSTRUCTION WORK IN PROVINCE HAS BEEN GRINDING TO HALT OVER LAST FEW WEEKS AND MANY LOCALS HAVE BEEN OFF JOB FOR SOME TIME. ACCORDING TO ASSOCIATION OF BUILDING CONTRACTORS OF QUEBEC OVER HALF THE CONSTRUCTION WORK FORCE WAS OFF THE JOB WHEN CURRENT STRIKE WAS ANNOUNCED.
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